

March 17, 2025



Chair Neron, Vice-Chair Dobson, Vice-Chair McIntyre and Members of the House Committee on Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of HB 3568 – the Seafood to Schools Act.

The Oregon Farm to School Network recognizes that special attention and resources are needed to address access to and education about Oregon's seafood for Oregon's students.

This bill will support our fishing industry on the coast, as well as provide healthy proteins to our children around the state. It's a win for the fishing industry, for our local economies on the coast, and our children's health.

Right now, our Coastal communities are in the process of building necessary infrastructure and capacity to bring more Oregon-landed seafood to coastal and inland communities in our state. Through active work on this issue, OCVA and the Oregon Ocean Cluster (OOC) connected with the Oregon Farm to School Network to explore expanding access to - and education about - seafood for Oregon students. This has become the Seafood to Schools working group.

While the Seafood to Schools working group has successfully increased sales to schools, coordinated culinary training and resources for child nutrition programs, developed seafood recipes for child nutrition programs, it has also identified opportunities and needs for future growth. Please keep this amazing momentum moving and help raise this effort to the next level of success!!

The Seafood to Schools Bill is a wonderful way to ensure that school food preparers and students have the technical support to prepare fresh local seafood. It also would support training for future chefs in seafood butchery and preparation, in addition to sparking their imaginations through development of creative kid-friendly local seafood dishes.

In particular, we support technical assistance funding to the Oregon Department of Agriculture to support these efforts. While we have some concern as to the capacity of the Department of Education to implement this funding in a timely manner, we support increased funding to OCVA and ODA to address significant challenges that are specific to seafood in schools. Increasing current farm to school funding in agency budgets is also crucial for the success of farm to school in our state.

Farm to School and Seafood to Schools funding is not an expenditure; it's an investment that will pay off for generations.

Sincerely,

Melina Barker

Oregon Farm to School Network, Director